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ANTIM ASSURED 100+

PART I • HEADLINES TO ECONOMY

Friday, 24 July 2026

"The Topper's Last Read. Every Morning."

§1 · TOP 10 HEADLINES — 24 JULY 2026

1. **PM Modi announces Anti-Paper-Leak Bill** — Cabinet clears today (Friday); comprehensive draft with stricter punishments + fast-track courts; to be introduced next week in Parliament. **GS2**
2. **VBSA Bill: JPC meeting postponed again** — 31-member JPC (chair D. Purandeswari) delays report for the second time to build wider consensus; Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan would replace UGC+AICTE+NCTE; NEP 2020 milestone. **GS2**
3. **Shabdlok — India's first immersive language museum** — National Library campus, Kolkata; inaugurated by HM Amit Shah July 19; 9 galleries; AI + holograms; 22 official languages; free till Aug 15. **GS1-GS2**
4. **Astra Mk1 BVRAAM — Saudi Arabia eyes India's missile** — Indonesia deal signed July 2026; Royal Saudi Air Force interested for F-15 fleet; 6 countries in queue post-Operation Sindoor. **GS2-GS3**
5. **Bharat Forge unveils FICV prototypes** — Both tracked + wheeled Future Infantry Combat Vehicles at R Defence Forces First Conclave 2026; Baba Kalyani; 100% indigenous; DCP framework. **GS3**
6. **GISAT-1A launch confirmed July 31** — GSLV-F17 carries EOS-05 from Sriharikota; India's first geostationary earth observation satellite for real-time subcontinent-wide disaster monitoring. **GS3**
7. **Gems of India Challenge launched** — I&B Ministry + YouTube + Meta; MyWAVES/WAVES OTT platform; grassroots digital creators; entries August 1-31; Orange Economy; ₹50,000 district-level prizes. **GS3**
8. **Nilgiri Tahr population rises to 1,364** — Tamil Nadu 3rd synchronised survey; 4.68% rise; Anamalai Hills 44.87%; VARUDAI Android app; forest fires remain key threat. **ENV**
9. **Parliament Monsoon Session Day 5** — Houses set to resume after weekend break; FCRA Amendment + Income-Tax Ordinance Bill on legislative calendar; Opposition strategy recalibrated. **GS2**

10. **India defence exports cross ₹21,000 crore FY25** — Record high; Astra Mk1 export demand validates Operation Sindoor; target ₹50,000 crore by 2030; 100+ countries receive Indian defence products. **GS3**

SAHYOG Today's headlines span 4 GS papers. Sahyog Mentorship structures daily current affairs into PYQ-mapped answer banks — theiasakademia.com.

§2 · POLITY & GOVERNANCE

GS2

Exam Governance · Legislation

24 July 2026 · New Delhi · Source: PIB / Cabinet Secretariat

Anti-Paper-Leak Bill 2026 — PM Modi Announces; Cabinet Clears; Fast-Track Courts; Stricter Punishments to Replace 2024 Act

Why in News: On July 24, 2026, PM Narendra Modi announced that the Union Cabinet has cleared a comprehensive new Anti-Paper-Leak Bill, designed to supersede the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, with significantly stricter provisions, harsher punishments, and fast-track court mechanisms. The bill is to be introduced in Parliament in the week beginning July 27, responding to the ongoing disruption of the Monsoon Session by Opposition parties demanding accountability for NEET-UG paper leak controversies.

Background: Examination paper leaks have plagued India's competitive exam ecosystem — NEET-UG, UPPSC, Bihar SSC, RRB, and multiple state PSC exams have all faced leaks in recent years, costing millions of aspirants their dreams and causing socio-political unrest. The 2024 Act provided for imprisonment up to 10 years and fines up to ₹1 crore. The new bill proposes even stricter punishments, organised crime provisions, and a dedicated fast-track court system at the district level.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024: enacted February 2024; penalises paper leaks, impersonation, and organised cheating with up to 10 years jail + ₹1 crore fine; applies to 15 central exam bodies including UPSC, SSC, NTA, RRB, IBPS.

- New Bill provisions (proposed): Organised crime angle — kingpin gang operators face life imprisonment; fast-track courts in each district for examination offences; forfeiture of assets of accused; CBI/NIA-grade investigation for multi-state leaks.
- NTA (National Testing Agency) context: NTA conducts NEET-UG (23 lakh+ candidates), JEE Main, CUET, and 16 other exams. NEET 2024 paper-leak controversy + grace marks scandal → Supreme Court scrutiny → NTA governance reforms 2025 → new bill now a political response.
- Constitutional provision: Education is in the Concurrent List (7th Schedule, List III, Entry 25). Both Parliament and State Legislatures can legislate on education. However, the new bill governs "examinations conducted by bodies established by Parliament" — exclusively a Central matter under List I Entry 66 (Coordination and standards in technical education).

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

Key trap: Education = Concurrent List (Entry 25, List III). But "universities" under Parliament Act = Entry 66, Union List I. So UPSC, SSC, NTA exams = Central subject (Entry 66 + Entry 77: Parliament-constituted bodies). State SSC exams = State subject. The new Anti-Paper-Leak Bill operates under Entry 66 + Entry 97 (residual powers). NTA was established under Registration of Societies Act 1860 — NOT a constitutional or statutory body but a Society registered under central law. This affects its accountability structure.

PYQ LINKAGE

GS2 2022: "Discuss the challenges to fair and transparent conduct of competitive examinations in India." | GS2 2019: "Role of NTA — examine its effectiveness in conducting national entrance examinations." | GS2 2024: "Constitutional provisions governing education in India — concurrent vs. union list tensions."

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Q. The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act was enacted in: (a) 2022 (b) 2023 (c) 2024 (d) 2025. **Answer: (c) 2024.** Enacted in February 2024 after NEET-UG paper leak controversy. It covers 15 central exam-conducting bodies and provides up to 10-year imprisonment and ₹1 crore fine for examination fraud.

GS2

Anti-Paper-Leak Bill

NTA

Examination Governance

Concurrent List

Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (VBSA) Bill — JPC Report Postponed Again; UGC+AICTE+NCTE Replacement Still Pending Consensus

Why in News: The 31-member Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) chaired by BJP MP Dr. D. Purandeswari has postponed, for a second time, the meeting to finalise its report on the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (VBSA) Bill, 2025 — the government says it wants to build wider consensus before finalising recommendations on institutional autonomy and federalism safeguards. No fresh date has been announced, and the report has therefore NOT yet been tabled. The legislation, once it clears the JPC and Parliament, would dissolve three decades-old higher education regulators — UGC, AICTE, and NCTE — replacing them with a single umbrella body under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 framework.

Background: The VBSA Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha on December 15, 2025, by Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. It implements a key NEP 2020 recommendation: replace fragmented regulatory bodies with a single integrated Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) — now renamed "Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan." The new body will have four verticals: the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC), the National Accreditation Council (NAC), the Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC), and the General Education Council (GEC) for academic standards.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Bodies abolished by VBSA Bill: UGC (University Grants Commission — est. under UGC Act 1956, Art. 312A); AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education — est. 1987, statutory); NCTE (National Council for Teacher Education — est. 1993, statutory). Medicine (NMC) and Law (BCI) remain separate.
- VBSA Structure: 4 verticals — NHERC (regulation, replacing UGC's regulatory role); NAC (accreditation, replacing NAAC); HEGC (grants, replacing UGC's funding role); GEC (academic standards). Chairperson + Members appointed by Central government.
- Contested issues still under JPC consultation (not yet finalised): whether states must be formally consulted before VBSA decisions affecting state universities; tenure security for

VBSA members; an independent appellate mechanism; the extent of autonomy for IITs, IIMs, and NLUs under VBSA.

- NEP 2020 link: NEP Chapter 18 recommended a "light but tight" regulatory system with a single regulator per professional domain. VBSA operationalises this for general + technical + teacher education. Medical (NMC Act 2020) and Legal (AIBE + BCI) have separate regimes already reformed.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

Memory trick: UGC (1956) → 70 years old → being replaced. AICTE (1987) → 39 years old. NCTE (1993) → 33 years old. All going under VBSA. Common trap: UGC was established under UGC Act 1956 — it's statutory but NOT constitutional. The Constitution (Art. 312A) only mentions repeal of laws providing for Central Services — not UGC. Critics' concern: VBSA concentrates power in MoE (Central government) — states fear loss of autonomy over state universities (Concurrent List). JPC's safeguard = states must be consulted. Compare: NMC Act 2020 (replaced MCI) had similar centralisation concerns.

PYQ LINKAGE

GS2 2020: "NEP 2020 — a paradigm shift in India's education system. Examine." | GS2 2023: "Reforms in higher education regulation — UGC's limitations and the way forward." | GS2 2019: "Examine the issues relating to autonomy and accountability in higher educational institutions."

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Q. The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (VBSA) Bill seeks to replace which combination of bodies? (a) UGC, AICTE, MCI (b) UGC, AICTE, NCTE (c) UGC, NMC, NCTE (d) AICTE, BCI, NCTE.

Answer: (b) UGC, AICTE, NCTE. The bill replaces the University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), and National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) with a single VBSA regulator. MCI was already replaced by NMC in 2020 separately.

GS2

VBSA Bill

UGC

AICTE

NCTE

NEP 2020

Higher Education

§3 · INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

GS2

Defence Exports · IR · Strategic

July 20–21, 2026 · Source: Ministry of Defence / PIB

Astra Mk1 BVRAAM — Saudi Arabia & Indonesia Express Interest; 6 Countries in Queue; Operation Sindoor Validates India's Air Combat Missile

Why in News: India's indigenously-developed Astra Mk1 Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM) has attracted significant international interest following its operational validation in Operation Sindoor (May 2026). India concluded an Astra export deal with Indonesia, and the Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) is now evaluating the Astra Mk1 for integration with its F-15S and F-15SA fleet. Armenia and four other countries are also in active procurement discussions. This positions India as a serious defence exporter in the active air-combat missile segment — historically dominated by the US (AIM-120 AMRAAM), France (MICA), and Russia (R-77).

Background: India's defence export ecosystem has grown rapidly — from ₹1,521 crore in FY17 to ₹21,083 crore in FY25 (a 13.8× growth). The government targets ₹50,000 crore by FY30. Astra (Sanskrit: weapon) is a DRDO-developed air-to-air missile; Mk1 (range ~80 km, active radar homing, Mach 4.5+) is already operational with IAF on Su-30 MKI and Tejas aircraft. Astra Mk2 (range 150+ km) is in advanced development.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Astra Mk1: Range ~80 km; speed Mach 4.5+; active radar seeker (RF homing); smokeless propulsion; ECM resistance; developed by DRDO's DRDL Hyderabad; produced by BDL (Bharat Dynamics Limited); operational with IAF since 2020.
- Saudi-US constraint: Saudi F-15s procured via US FMS (Foreign Military Sales); EUM (End-Use Monitoring) rules require Washington's approval for third-party weapon integration; Boeing certification also needed. India-US "almost complete" trade deal (from Jaishankar-Rubio Manila July 22) may ease this pathway.
- Operation Sindoor (May 2026): India's precision strikes into Pakistan; Astra Mk1 and ASRAAM reportedly used in air engagements; post-operation data validated Indian missile systems internationally — triggering surge in global inquiries.

- India defence export trajectory: FY17 ₹1,521 cr → FY22 ₹12,814 cr → FY24 ₹21,083 cr; 100+ countries receive Indian defence products; major items: Akash missile system, Tejas aircraft, artillery systems, BMP-II, ammunition, electronics. Astra export adds air-to-air missile to India's export catalogue.

🧠 LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

BVRAAM vs SRAAM distinction: BVRAAM (Beyond Visual Range: >20 km) vs SRAAM (Short Range Air-to-Air: <20 km). Astra Mk1 = BVRAAM. ASRAAM (Advanced Short Range Air-to-Air Missile) = British SRAAM, used by IAF on Jaguar. India's Defence Export Push: iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence) + DPP/DAP 2020 + DRDO tech transfer to private sector + BDL/BEL + 4 new DRDO-OFB joint ventures. GS4 angle: Astra to Saudi Arabia while Saudi Arabia has Yemen war ongoing — ethical dimension of arms exports.

📋 PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2023: "India's defence exports — progress, challenges and strategic significance." | GS2 2022: "Examine the significance of India-Saudi Arabia bilateral relations." | GS3 2020: "Indigenisation of defence production — examine India's progress under Atmanirbharta."

🎯 PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Q. The Astra Mk1 BVRAAM is produced by which DRDO laboratory? (a) DRDL Hyderabad + BDL (b) ARDE Pune + OFB (c) DMRL Hyderabad + HAL (d) SSPL Delhi + BEL. **Answer: (a) DRDL Hyderabad + BDL.** DRDL (Defence Research and Development Laboratory) Hyderabad developed Astra; BDL (Bharat Dynamics Limited) produces it. ARDE Pune develops artillery; HAL produces aircraft.

GS2

GS3

Astra Mk1

BVRAAM

Defence Exports

Saudi Arabia

Atmanirbhar

GS1

Culture · Language · Soft Power

19 July 2026 · Kolkata · Source: PIB / Ministry of Culture

Shabdlok — India's First Immersive Language Museum at National Library, Kolkata; 22 Official Languages; AI + Holograms; Cultural

Diplomacy

Why in News: Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah inaugurated Shabdlok (Museum of Word) — India's first immersive language museum — at the National Library campus in Kolkata on July 19, 2026. Developed under the Ministry of Culture, Shabdlok uses AI, motion sensors, and holograms across 9 thematic galleries to showcase India's 22 constitutionally-recognised languages (8th Schedule) and approximately 380 other living languages and dialects, positioning India as the world's most linguistically diverse democracy.

Background: India is home to the 2nd-largest number of languages globally (after Papua New Guinea), with 22 officially scheduled languages and hundreds of endangered languages. The National Library of India (Kolkata) — established 1836, India's largest library (>2.2 million volumes) — is under MoC. Shabdlok connects to India's soft power strategy: projecting linguistic heritage internationally through the Indian Cultural Relations Council (ICCR), Pravasi Bharatiya Divas conventions, and now immersive cultural institutions.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Shabdlok — 9 Galleries: The Journey of Words; Scripts and Alphabets; Classical Languages (Tamil, Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, Odia); Folk and Oral Traditions; Endangered Languages Lab; Languages of India's Diaspora; India's Literary Greats; Digital Language Archive; Interactive Language Learning Zone.
- 8th Schedule — 22 languages: Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu. (Maithili and Dogri were the most recently added, via 92nd Amendment 2003.)
- Classical language status (India): Tamil (2004), Sanskrit (2005), Kannada (2008), Telugu (2008), Malayalam (2013), Odia (2014), Marathi (2024), Pali (2024), Prakrit (2024) = 9 Classical Languages now.
- National Library of India: Located at Belvedere Estate, Alipore, Kolkata; 1836 (as Public Library of Calcutta); renamed 1953; receives mandatory deposit copies of all publications under Delivery of Books Act 1954; contains 2.2+ million volumes; functions under Ministry of Culture.

💡 LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

Classical Language criteria (India): must have a literary tradition (1,500-2,000 years of recorded history), independent tradition (not borrowed from another language), with distinguished

ancient literature. Tamil was first (2004) — oldest recorded classical language in India. The 8th Schedule trap: 22 scheduled languages ≠ official languages. India has NO national language; Hindi + English are official languages of the Union under Art. 343. 8th Schedule (Art. 344) simply lists recognised languages for Official Language Commission purposes. Santali uses Ol Chiki script — NOT Devanagari — important MCQ fact.

PYQ LINKAGE

GS1 2020: "India's linguistic diversity — challenges and opportunities." | GS2 2021: "Examine India's policy on classical languages — criteria and significance." | GS1 2023: "Soft power as an instrument of India's foreign policy — analyse with examples."

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Q. Which of the following was NOT one of the languages added to the 8th Schedule by the 92nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003? (a) Bodo (b) Dogri (c) Maithili (d) Konkani. **Answer: (d) Konkani.** Konkani was added by the 71st Amendment (1992) along with Manipuri and Nepali. The 92nd Amendment (2003) added Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, and Santhali, taking the count from 18 to 22.

GS1

GS2

Shabdalok

8th Schedule

National Library

Classical Languages

Soft Power

ANTIM 2027

ANTIM 2027 Mains Programme dedicates a full GS1 module to Indian Culture, Art and Language with PYQ-mapped answer frameworks. theiasakademia.com.

§4 · DEFENCE & SECURITY

GS3

Indigenous Defence · FICV · DCPD

July 2026 · R Defence Forces First Conclave · Source: Ministry of Defence / PIB

Bharat Forge Unveils Tracked + Wheeled FICV Prototypes — 100% Indigenous; DCPD Framework; Replaces Soviet-Era BMP-II

Why in News: Bharat Forge Chairman Baba Kalyani revealed at the R Defence Forces First Conclave 2026 that the Kalyani Group (in partnership with Tata Advanced Systems) has successfully developed two fully indigenous Future Infantry Combat Vehicle (FICV) prototypes — one tracked (for plains/armour operations) and one wheeled (for mountain/urban operations) — under the Ministry of Defence's Development-cum-Production Partner (DCPP) framework. These represent the most advanced infantry combat platforms produced entirely in India.

Background: India's Mechanised Infantry currently operates the Soviet-designed BMP-II (Sarath) — inducted in 1987. Over 2,000+ BMP-IIs are in service but are approaching obsolescence. The FICV programme is among the largest single procurement programmes for the Indian Army, covering a potential order of 1,770+ vehicles worth ~₹60,000+ crore. The DCPP framework (introduced under Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020) enables private sector companies to be designated as production partners for indigenously-designed platforms.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- FICV specs (Bharat Forge concept): 30+ tonne IFV (Infantry Fighting Vehicle); 30mm autocannon; anti-tank guided missile launcher; active protection system; NBC (Nuclear, Biological, Chemical) protection; crew of 3 + 8 infantry; amphibious capability for tracked variant.
- DCPP Framework (DAP 2020): allows private sector to own design IP and production rights; Ministry provides trial support; successful DCPP = Make in India + defence industrial base + export potential. Bharat Forge-Tata partnership = India's first DCPP for major land platform.
- Competition: L&T (with Allison Transmission powertrain) also developing FICV under DCPP. Multiple DCPP partners = ensures technology competition before final selection. Army will evaluate and select based on trials.
- Bharat Forge background: Kalyani Group; world's 2nd largest forging company; HQ Pune; defence division includes Kalyani Strategic Systems; makes artillery barrels (ATAGS), armoured vehicle components, propellant charges. Entering platform-level with FICV is a leap from component supplier to system integrator.

💡 LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

BMP vs FICV: BMP-II (Soviet-origin, Russian = Boyevaya Mashina Pekhoty = Infantry Fighting Vehicle). India calls it Sarath ("charioteer"). 30mm gun + Konkurs ATGM. BMP-II inducted 1987 via licensed production at OFB Medak. FICV = next-gen replacement with better armour, fire-power, electronics. DCPD vs Make II: Under old DPP, "Make II" projects had government-funded trials. Under DAP 2020, DCPD companies invest their own funds for development → own the IP → government buys the product. Risk: private firms; reward: IP ownership + export rights. This is Atmanirbharta's private sector pillar.

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2022: "Indigenisation of defence — progress under Atmanirbhar Bharat." | GS3 2024: "Private sector in India's defence manufacturing — challenges and opportunities." | GS3 2021: "Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020 — examine its significance for India's defence ecosystem."

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Q. The Future Infantry Combat Vehicle (FICV) is intended to replace which currently operational infantry vehicle in the Indian Army? (a) T-90 Bhishma (b) Arjun MBT (c) BMP-II Sarath (d) TATA Kestrel. **Answer: (c) BMP-II Sarath.** The Soviet-designed BMP-II, locally produced as Sarath (IFV), has been in Indian Army service since 1987 and is being replaced by the indigenous FICV programme under DCPD.

GS3

FICV

Bharat Forge

DCPD

DAP 2020

Atmanirbhar

BMP-II

§5 · SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

GS3

ISRO · Geostationary · Disaster Mgmt

Launch: July 31, 2026 · Sriharikota · Source: ISRO / Department of Space (PIB)

GISAT-1A (EOS-05) on GSLV-F17 — July 31 Launch; India's First GEO Earth Observation Satellite; Real-Time Disaster Monitoring

Why in News: ISRO has confirmed the July 31, 2026 launch of GISAT-1A (also designated EOS-05 / Earth Observation Satellite-05) aboard the GSLV-F17 (GSLV Mk II) from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre's (SDSC-SHAR) Second Launch Pad, Sriharikota. This will be India's first operational geostationary imaging satellite, enabling continuous, real-time observation of the Indian subcontinent for disaster monitoring, weather surveillance, and agricultural assessment — without the revisit-time limitation of LEO satellites.

Background: GISAT-1A is a retry after GISAT-1 (EOS-03) mission failure on August 12, 2021, when the GSLV Mk II (F10) mission failed in the cryogenic stage. Geostationary Earth Observation (GEO-EO) offers a critical capability gap for India: India's existing EO fleet (Cartosat, Resourcesat, RISAT) operates in LEO (revisit time: 1-5 days), whereas a GEO satellite can continuously image the same area every 30 minutes, critical for monitoring cyclones, floods, forest fires, and crop health.

KEY FACTS

- GISAT-1A specs: GEO orbit (35,786 km altitude; 74° E longitude); multi-spectral + hyper-spectral imaging; 6 cameras (Visible+NIR at 50m; 300m; 1,000m resolutions); thermal infrared; revisit: 30-minute imaging of India; designed for 8-year mission life.
- GSLV-F17 (GSLV Mk II): 3-stage rocket; Stage 1 = solid fuel; Stage 2 = liquid fuel (Vikas engine); Stage 3 = CE-7.5 cryogenic engine (indigenous; ISRO developed after Russia refused transfer in 1992); payload capacity to GTO: ~2,500 kg. GISAT-1A mass: ~2,268 kg.
- SDSC-SHAR (Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota — Harikota Island, Nellore district, Andhra Pradesh): ISRO's primary launch centre; named after late ISRO Chairman Satish Dhawan; two launch pads (SLP: commissioned 1971; SLP2: commissioned 2005); coordinates: 13.7°N 80.2°E.
- Applications: (1) Cyclone tracking (real-time — critical for Bay of Bengal cyclones); (2) Flood monitoring (daily updates during monsoon); (3) Agricultural drought early warning; (4) Forest fire detection; (5) Glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) monitoring; (6) India-Pakistan/China border surveillance capability.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

GEO vs LEO vs SSO: GEO (36,000 km) = stays above one spot → continuous coverage but limited resolution. LEO (400-2,000 km) = fast revisit but only minutes per pass. SSO (Sun-Synchronous) = Cartosat, RISAT series — always same sun angle, good for consistent imagery. Cryogenic engine story: Russia refused to share cryo engine tech in 1992 under US pressure →

ISRO independently developed CE-7.5 → took 16 years → first used on GSLV Mk II D1 (2001 partial success). This is why GSLV cryogenic stage is a sovereignty story, not just engineering.

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2022: "Role of space technology in disaster management in India." | GS3 2023: "ISRO's contributions to India's development — examine with specific examples." | GS3 2020: "India's satellite-based communication and earth observation systems — assess significance."

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Q. GISAT-1A is also known as: (a) EOS-03 (b) EOS-05 (c) Cartosat-3A (d) RISAT-2B. **Answer: (b) EOS-05.** GISAT-1A = EOS-05 (Earth Observation Satellite-05). Note: EOS-03 was the failed 2021 GISAT-1 mission. GISAT-1A is a fresh spacecraft (not the same satellite recovered) targeting GEO orbit for continuous India coverage.

GS3

GISAT-1A

EOS-05

GSLV-F17

Geostationary

Disaster Monitoring

ISRO

LAKSHYAM AIR1

LAKSHYAM AIR1 covers India's space economy including ISRO missions, GSLV vs PSLV vs LVM3, and satellite applications for GS3. theiasakademia.com.

§6 · ECONOMY

GS3

Orange Economy · Digital Creator · Media

21 July 2026 · Source: PIB / Ministry of Information & Broadcasting

Gems of India Challenge — I&B Ministry + YouTube + Meta Launch Grassroots Digital Creator Programme; Orange Economy; MyWAVES Platform

Why in News: The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting launched the pilot phase of the "Gems of India" Challenge on July 21, 2026 — a national initiative to identify, nurture, and

promote grassroots digital creators across India through the MyWAVES section of India's own WAVES OTT platform. Partnering with YouTube and Meta, the programme invites creators in 6 pilot regions to submit 1-3 minute videos showcasing local culture, heritage, and stories. District-level prize: up to 20 winners × ₹50,000. Entries open August 1-31, 2026. This connects India's digital creator economy to the global Orange Economy (creative economy) framework.

Background: The WAVES (World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit) is India's equivalent of Cannes or NAB Show — the Ministry of I&B's flagship platform for India's media and entertainment industry (launched February 2025 in Mumbai). MyWAVES is its OTT streaming arm. India's digital economy has 850 million+ internet users, 200+ million YouTube content creators (2nd globally), and a creator economy estimated at \$2-3 billion annually — but revenue concentration remains with top-tier creators, leaving grassroots creators without platforms or monetisation pathways.

KEY FACTS

- Gems of India Challenge — Pilot Phase: 6 regions: Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Goa, Ladakh. Purpose: test format before national rollout. 3-tier prizes: District (20 winners × ₹50,000), State/UT, National. Videos via MyWAVES on WAVES OTT.
- Orange Economy (Creative Economy): UNESCO framework for the economic value of cultural and creative industries — includes arts, design, fashion, music, film, gaming, digital content, handicrafts. Global Orange Economy = ~\$2.25 trillion (2023); growing at 5%+ annually. India target: \$1 trillion creative economy contribution by 2030.
- WAVES OTT platform: Launched as India's own public OTT alternative to Netflix/Amazon; free-to-access; multilingual; content from Doordarshan, Films Division, NFDC, regional producers; MyWAVES = creator upload section (India's YouTube equivalent for local content). Managed under Prasara Bharati + I&B Ministry.
- India digital creator economy: 850 million+ internet users (2026); creator economy worth ~\$2.5-3B; but concentration: top 1% creators earn 90% revenue. Gems of India democratises access by supporting District-level creators with platforms, prizes, and Ministry visibility.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

Orange Economy vs Blue Economy vs Green Economy: Blue = ocean/marine resources (fisheries, shipping, Blue Carbon); Green = clean/sustainable economy (renewables, green finance); Orange = creative/cultural economy (UNESCO concept). India's media/entertainment sector (M&E): ₹2.32 lakh crore (2025 FICCI estimate); growing at 10%+ CAGR. OTT (Over-The-

Top) regulation: IT Rules 2021 (Part III) governs digital news media and OTT; classification: A (all ages), A7, U, UA7+, UA13+, U/A 16+, A. I&B Ministry's WAVES creating India's own creator-friendly OTT is a strategic sovereign alternative to Big-Tech platforms.

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2023: "India's digital economy — opportunities and policy challenges." | GS2 2022: "Regulation of OTT platforms in India — examine the legal framework and issues." | GS3 2021: "Cultural industries and India's soft power — assess significance of creative economy."

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Q. The "Gems of India" Challenge for digital creators uses which platform for video submissions? (a) Doordarshan Plus (b) MyWAVES on WAVES OTT (c) YouTube exclusively (d) NFDC Digital Portal. **Answer: (b) MyWAVES on WAVES OTT.** The I&B Ministry's Gems of India Challenge uses the MyWAVES section of the WAVES (World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit) OTT platform, partnering with YouTube and Meta for wider reach.

GS3

Gems of India

Orange Economy

WAVES OTT

Digital Creators

I&B Ministry

MyWAVES

NEEB 300+ NEEB 300+ Live PYQ Writing covers GS3 Economy including digital economy, media regulation, and creative industries with PYQ mapping. theiasakademia.com.

★ THEIAS AKADEMIA — PROOF OF PRECISION

UPSC CSE Prelims 2026 Results

In what critics called the most unpredictable Prelims paper in a decade —

48

QUESTIONS FROM
ANTIM ASSURED 100+

7

QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE DOCUMENT

6

QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE CLASS

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